

VZCZCXYZ0001  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHAM #3989/01 2691459  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 261459Z SEP 07  
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0422  
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 003989

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

FOR NEA/ELA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/26/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KISL](#) [JO](#)  
SUBJECT: MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD SAYS IT WILL TAKE PART IN  
JORDAN'S PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN NOVEMBER

REF: AMMAN 3632

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

#### Summary

-----

¶1. (C) The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Jordan announced on September 25 that its political wing, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), will take part in parliamentary elections scheduled to be held on November 20. Yesterday's announcement followed months of IAF threats to boycott the parliamentary polls because of MB claims that municipal elections held on July 31 were rigged by the government. In the lead-up to the decision, MB leaders met with Prime Minister Bakhit, and both sides signaled a de-escalation of their rhetorical clashes that have been ongoing since the municipal poll. Contacts have speculated to poloffs that the decision was in part a result of an MB-GOJ deal that would preserve the parliamentary status quo, ensuring that the IAF would keep 15-17 seats in the 110-member body and that the Front would take part in the parliamentary vote. COMMENT: Despite this announcement, it is still possible that the IAF will change course and boycott the elections. PM Bakhit's meeting with the MB does not reflect the attitude of those in the King's innermost circle, who are also intent on reducing - but not eliminating - the size of the MB's parliamentary bloc. End Summary.

#### Muslim Brotherhood's Party to Run for Parliament

-----

¶2. (U) The MB announced September 25 that it would participate in parliamentary elections scheduled to be held on November 20. The announcement came after two months of IAF-generated media speculation over the party's threatened boycott following its claims of irregularities in the municipal election held on July 31 (reftel).

¶3. (C) The MB's announcement came on the heels of a surprise meeting between Prime Minister Bakhit and leaders of the MB on September 19. Muslim Brotherhood Controller General Salem Falahat, Deputy Controller General Jamil Abu Baker, former Controller General Abdul Majeed Thnaibat and former Secretary General Abdul Latif Arabiyyat took part in the meeting that included on the government side, Minister of Interior Eid al-Fayez and Public Sector Reform Minister Mohammad Thuneibat. Note: Current IAF Secretary General Zaki Bani-Irsheid was not part of the MB/IAF delegation that met with the Prime Minister, suggesting a continuing rift between the Front leader and the PM. End note.

#### GOJ and IAF Cease Rhetorical Clashes

-----

14. (U) Following the meeting, the Prime Minister and IAF issued separate statements to the press that referred to a "reasonable dialogue," a clear de-escalation of the rhetorical clashes that have characterized IAF-GOJ relations since the municipal election (reftel). The Islamic movement during the meeting reportedly welcomed King Abdullah's directives to the government to ensure that the parliamentary elections would be held "freely and transparently."

#### Claims of a Deal to Keep the Status Quo

-----

15. (C) The MB's decision follows an announcement on September 11 by the Higher Coordinating Committee for opposition political parties - which brings together 12 opposition parties and the IAF - to take part in the November polls. The IAF did not take part in that decision, and its absence was noted by political observers. Much media commentary has predicted that the IAF would in fact participate because the alternative - a self-imposed exclusion from the political sphere - would be too damaging to the Front. Multiple Jordanian contacts have speculated to poloffs that the MB decision was a result of an agreement between the government and the Islamic movement that would essentially preserve the parliamentary status quo regarding the number of seats that the IAF would win in the next parliament. The Front had 17 seats in Jordan's 110-member parliament whose term ended on August 19 (in order for elections to be scheduled for November). While the IAF candidates have not been announced, contacts have told poloffs that the IAF was likely to field candidates in 25 electoral contests. COMMENT: Senior officials close to the King have told the Ambassador their goal is to use legal means to reduce, at least by a few seats, the MB's parliamentary bloc. END COMMENT.

#### It's Not Over Yet

-----

16. (C) COMMENT: Given the MB/IAF's track record of frequent changes of course (and past-the-last-minute boycotts) in the recent and distant past, this announcement that it would participate in November's polls should not be considered the final word. Enough time remains between now and the November election for several more zig-zags from Jordan's Islamists, although at the end of the day, their interest is in preserving a sizeable presence in parliament. At the same time, PM Bakhit's approach of public de-escalation with the IAF is not shared by the King or his innermost circle.

Visit Amman's Classified Web Site at  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/amman/>  
Hale